

## Mental Culture for Inner Peace

The main purpose of everyone's life is happiness. We do everything like studying, getting married, earning money and feeding children wishing happiness. Unfortunately, day by day we go against happiness instead of towards the real happiness. Hence understanding of happiness and its path what Buddhism illustrates is very important to achieve the real happiness.

If we have any kind of negative feeling such as stress in our mind, its cause is impure mind. When the mind is with desire (or greed, craving), anger or delusion, the mind is unclean. Impure mind always brings suffering, discomfort, tears, unsatisfactoriness and restlessness. Also impure mind with defilements such as lust, anger and delusion always disturbs peace of mind. The main path how to overcome suffering is the understanding of mental condition what happens to one's mind in the present moment. Here knowledge and mindfulness play a main role.

If someone has a clear understanding, he can see that whenever the mind has suffering or stress, mind is with desire or anger. Also both desire and anger depend on the capacity of delusion. People are mostly stressed because of desire or anger. If someone has a big attachment after having a lustful experience, he thinks about it again and again to gain it or keep it continuously. Then he is unsatisfied and worried when it changes or is out of control. Similarly after having an unwilling or unpleasant experience if someone thinks that it is still happening, his mind conflicts against the experience. Then he suffers or worries. Both attachment and conflict arise whenever there is delusion or ignorance. Delusion means unknowing of arising and ceasing of our experience that we receive through our senses.

To reduce desire, anger and delusion, people should use short time as well as long time techniques. As a short time technique to reduce desire, anger and delusion, we should be knowledgeable about the Karmic law. The Karmic law points out the cause and effect of the mind and its results. If someone does something with a wicked mind, he will receive bad results because of polluted mind. Simultaneously, if someone does something with pure mind, he will have the fruitful results because of pure mind. With this understanding nobody likes to receive evil results. Therefore they go away from evil as much as possible. He always tries to keep mind away from lust and anger. Not doing evil results not having contrition and suffering. On the other hand, he tries to practice good deeds because he knows doing merits brings happiness. Practicing good deeds is receiving happiness. Practicing good is a synonym of happiness. With this understanding he tries to fulfil good deeds as much as he can. Here he practices generosity, morality and meditation to generate his spiritual energy. After doing these meritorious deeds, he is happy thinking of those deeds. He has less or no reasons to regret. Also he has a lot of reasons to be happy. Further he sees the visible results of his activities in this life itself. He is encouraged by doing good deeds and discouraged by doing evil.

The second step of reducing stress with a long time technique is the understanding of cause and effect the Dependent Origination (*Paticca-samuppada*). To reduce stress more, a wise

person has to go forward on the path of what the Buddha taught. Here understanding of impermanence is one of the essential needs. This is the main theme or the unique taught in Buddhism. We get experience through our senses such as eyes, ears, nose ..... When we see, hear or smell something, it means five aggregates (Forms, feelings, perception, mental formations and consciousness) arise together and cease at the moment. At the moment when when conditions are together experience arises, also the experience ceases when conditions separate nothing remaining. This truth represents the impermanence. The most valuable and interesting explanation in Buddhism is the impermanence, *Anicca*. It is said in Buddhism; **Not being occurred (in the past) comes to an occurrence. Being occurred (at the present) would not come to (the future) occurrence** (අනුන්වා සම්භවනං නුන්වා න භවිස්සති). This is the nature of impermanence that Buddhism illuminates. The impermanence is described in Buddhism according to the dependent origination (Paticca Samuppada) This is the world reality according to the ultimate truth whether we like or not, and whether we know or not. Unknowing or ignorance of cause and effect is the main cause of suffering as well as stress. If someone has this knowledge, he tries to overcome suffering practicing the Buddha's message. He always tries to live in the present moment seeing impermanence. Then he has no regrets or wishes. He lives with fully mindfulness. He sees the beauty of life living in the present moment. Whatever he thinks about past or future, he knows that he only reads his mind and not the real situation. He sees past or future without greed and anger. With this knowledge he may find the path to achieve this goal. The path of purification is the three disciplines. They are

1. Virtue
2. Tranquility
3. Wisdom

These three disciplines again can be described as eight steps. It is called as the Noble Eightfold Path. They are

The Noble Eight Fold Path –

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|------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Right Understanding | (Sammà Ditthi)    |
| 2. Right Thoughts      | (Sammà samkappa)  |
| 3. Right Speech        | (Sammà Vàcà)      |
| 4. Right Action        | (Sammà kammantha) |
| 5. Right Livelihood    | (Sammà àjiva)     |
| 6. Right Effort        | (Sammà Vàyàma)    |
| 7. Right Mindfulness   | (Sammà sathi)     |
| 8. Right Concentration | (Sammà samàdhi)   |

**May The Triple Gem Bless you!**

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